DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 438 525 CS 013 890

TITLE	Spotlight on Reading. A Companion to: Beginning Reading Instruction. A Response from the Texas Education Agency and The Texas Mentor School Network Region XIII to the Governor's Reading Challenge. Texas Reading Initiative.
INSTITUTION	Texas Education Agency, Austin.; Education Service Center Region 13, Austin, TX.
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	46p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Beginning Reading; *Class Activities; Decoding (Reading); Independent Reading; Language Acquisition; Primary Education; Reading Aloud to Others; *Reading Instruction; Reading Strategies; Spelling; Vocabulary Development; Writing (Composition)
IDENTIFIERS	Alphabetic Principle; Phonemic Awareness

ABSTRACT

This booklet presents many examples of instructional activities that occur on a daily basis on the campuses of Spotlight Schools, schools identified by the Texas Education Agency as having student populations that reflect a diversity of ethnicity and socioeconomic backgrounds, and demonstrate that essentially all children can become readers. It is designed as a companion to the "little red book"--officially known as "Beginning Reading Instruction: Components and Features of a Research-Based Reading Program"--which describes some important aspects of effective reading instruction, as well as elements of classroom and campus supports for effective instruction. The activities in this booklet exemplify the components of instruction that appear in the little red book. The activities in the booklet are divided into sections on oral language development; concepts of print; reading aloud; phonemic awareness; alphabetic knowledge; alphabetic principle; decoding strategies; writing and spelling; fluency development; independent reading; vocabulary development; and comprehension strategies. A list of Spotlight Schools and a list, of 28 commercially developed materials Spotlight Schools principals reported in use at their schools are attached. (RS)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 438 525

Spotlight on Reading

A Companion to: Beginning Reading Instruction

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
L. Kemp
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

A response from the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Mentor School Network Region XIII to the Governor's Reading Challenge

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Texas Reading Initiative

CS 015 870

1997

Introduction

In January 1996, Governor George W. Bush issued a challenge to the citizens of Texas – by third grade, all children will read at or above grade level and will continue to read at grade level or higher throughout the rest of their school years. The Texas Reading Initiative was created to help organize educators, parents, state officials, business people, and other community members as they worked to meet the Governor's challenge.

The identification of 12 Reading Spotlight Schools by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Mentor School Network was one response to the Governor's challenge. The Spotlight Schools, whose student populations reflect a diversity of ethnicity and socioeconomic backgrounds, demonstrate that essentially all children can become readers. During the past year, staff members of the Spotlight Schools have shared their ideas and practices at meetings with educators across the state of Texas. These staff members have talked about their programs of instruction, methods of working with struggling readers, staff organization, assessment procedures, in-service programs and more. In addition, each Spotlight School has welcomed visitors and introduced them to teachers, students, and administrators in action. Spotlight School staff members have been generous with their knowledge, their experience, and their time.

Another response from TEA to the Governor's challenge was the development of the document *Beginning Reading Instruction: Components and Features of a Research-Based Reading Program,* also known as the "little red book." This booklet describes some important aspects of effective reading instruction as well as elements of classroom and campus support for effective instruction. It has been made available to elementary campuses throughout Texas. In preparing the present report, we asked the principals and teachers of Spotlight Schools to describe activities from their classrooms that exemplified the components of instruction that appear in the little red book. The Spotlight staffs willingly responded with many examples of instructional activities that occur on a daily basis on their campuses.

From the many activities we received, we have selected a sample for our readers to consider. These are ideas straight from classrooms. As is true in life, the activities do not fall neatly into one reading component; they often overlap into one or more components. The variety, inventiveness, and practical nature of these activities are evident. What is not quite evident is the creative orchestration of such activities into effective "total" programs of reading instruction. It is the smooth-flowing programs of instruction that is revealed when staff members talk about their schools. It is the achievement, good cheer, and pride of the students that are revealed when visitors observe in the schools.

Also apparent to visitors is the interaction of classroom activities with both teacher-made and commercial materials. This report includes a listing of some of the commercially developed materials the principals reported in use in their schools. This listing is not intended as an endorsement of any particular materials, nor does it represent all the materials being used in Spotlight Reading Schools. Obviously, it is how teachers and students utilize materials, when and for what purposes, that makes them effective. What is being endorsed is the creativity and commitment of the staff members who are dedicated to the goal of having all children become readers. They devote their time, wisdom, and persistence to the achievement of this goal.

Susan Barnes
Interim Deputy Director, Statewide Initiatives
Region XIII Education Service Center

Carmyn Neely
Former Deputy Director, Statewide
Region XIII Education Service Center

Additional information about Reading Spotlight Schools is available in the following publication: *Patterns of Success: Successful Pathways to Elementary Literacy in Texas Spotlight Schools.*

To order, contact:
Texas Center for Educational Research,
P.O. Box 2947
Austin, Texas 78768-2947
512-467-3632 or 512-467-3618 FAX

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction i
Table of Contents iii
Oral Language Development 1
Concepts of Print 2
Reading Aloud 4
Phonemic Awareness 7
Alphabetic Knowledge 11
Alphabetic Principle 13
Decoding Strategies 17
Writing and Spelling 19
Fluency Development 22
Independent Reading 23
Vocabulary Development 24
Comprehension Strategies 26
Reading Spotlight Schools 32
Instructional Materials 35

1. Oral Language Development

Children have opportunities to expand their use and appreciation of oral language.

Comprehension of written language depends largely upon the child's effective use and understanding of oral language. Language experiences are a central component of good reading instruction. Children learn a great deal about the world, about themselves, and about each other from spoken language.

General Instructional Activities

General instructional activities in kindergarten and first-grade classrooms that focus on listening, speaking, and understanding include the following:

- Discussions that focus on a variety of topics, including problem solving
- Activities that help children understand the world, both in and out of the classroom
- Songs, chants, and poems that are fun to sing and say
- Concept development and vocabulary-building lessons
- Games and other activities that involve talking, listening, and in particular, following directions

Specific Classroom Activities

Poetry

Poetry is integrated into our thematic units for students to recite and sing. For the study of the **five** senses, the children recite:

Blue, blue sky
Oh, I can see the sky
I have my eyes
So I can see the sky.

Ring a ling
Oh, I can hear a bell
I have my ears
So, I can hear a bell...etc.

Dellview Elementary–San Antonio, TX **Kindergarten**

Poetry

In first grade, oral language and reading skills are reinforced through the use of poetry binders. Each child brings a 1" or 1-1/2" ringed binder to school (part of the yearly school supply list). Once a week, each child is given a copy of one or more poems to read, recite, and illustrate. Thematic-based poems are emphasized in all academic areas.

Dellview Elementary–San Antonio, TX **First Grade**

Reading directionality

Children look at a picture and model the same actions depicted in the picture. The picture has an arrow under it showing that the students move from left to right. The teacher touches the first picture and says, "This is what you do first." (The teacher models by touching her head.) She then says, "Show me what you do first." The children touch their heads. The teacher then says, "This is what you do next." (The teacher models by opening her mouth.) She then says, "Show me what you do next." The children open their mouths. The teacher repeats the activity. The teacher says to the children, "See if you can remember what you did first and what you did next. Show me what you did first." The children touch their heads. "Show me what you did next." The children open their mouths. The teacher then asks individual students to repeat the activity. This concept is reinforced as children work on written activities in which directionality is indicated by arrows moving left to right and top to bottom.

Wesley Elementary–Houston, TX **Kindergarten**

Class discussions with counselor

The school counselor conducts sessions that enable children to express themselves while they practice their language skills and build their vocabulary. These sessions, called Magic Circle, are 30–45 minute sessions in which students are given the opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions in words. The key to the Magic Circle session is communication. Besides expressing themselves, participants also become good listeners. Magic Circle also promotes a sense of honesty, respect, and willingness to accept others' opinions.

Heights Elementary–Laredo, TX **All Grades**

2. Concepts of Print

Children have opportunities to expand their use and appreciation of printed language.

An appreciation and understanding of the purposes and functions of written language are essential to motivate a child to learn to read. Children must become aware that printed language is all around them on signs, billboards, and labels, and in books, magazines, and newspapers, and that print serves many different purposes.

General Instructional Activities

Reading and writing instruction that focuses on the use and appreciation of written language includes the following:

- Activities that help children to understand that print represents spoken language
- Activities that highlight the meanings, uses, and production of print found in classroom signs, labels, notes, posters, calendars, and directions
- Activities that teach print conventions, such as directionality
- Activities in which children practice how to handle a book—how to turn pages, how to find the tops and bottoms of pages, and how to tell the front and back covers

- Activities in which children becoming conscious of individual words, for example, their boundaries, their appearance, and their length
- Activities in which children practice with predictable and patterned language stories

Specific Classroom Activities

Life experiences

The teacher presents a series of daily activities that revolve around the calendar posted in the classroom. She may begin with the days of the week or the months of the year. The teacher says, "Let's say the months of the year." Children say, "January, February, ..." The teacher may then ask, "How many months are in a year?" Even though the words are printed on the board, children are not reading them at this time. They are able to answer all of the teacher's questions. Then the class moves to the letter-of-the day activity, which requires children to provide words that begin with that letter. Children often give words that are familiar to them because of experiences outside of the classroom. (Letter *m* – a student may say MacDonalds) Children are also able to "read" signs on the bathroom doors, exit signs, handicapped parking areas, stop signs, and school zones.

Wesley Elementary–Houston, TX **Kindergarten**

Interactive bulletin boards

Word Wall: Students utilize word walls and thematic bulletin boards to aid them with their reading and writing activities. Words are categorized and alphabetized.

Dellview Elementary–San Antonio, TX **First Grade**

Poetry on charts

Lines of a poem are written on sentence strips for students to read and recite. Sentence strips are placed out of order for students to place in correct order. (The teacher emphasizes beginning sounds, punctuation, and rhyming words!)

Dellview Elementary–San Antonio, TX **Kindergarten**

Poetry on charts

The teacher has a prewritten poem on a chart. The class chorally reads the poem aloud, maintaining the beat of the poem. The teacher highlights words to focus on skills. We write adaptations that fit our integrated curriculum.

Dellview Elementary–San Antonio, TX **First Grade**

Multisensory activities: Writing in memory boxes (salt trays)

Sound-symbol relationship is reinforced through use of visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile channels. Students simultaneously pronounce and write the letters in the salt whereby the sound, symbol, and directionality for visual and auditory memory is reinforced. The students say the sound out loud (*a* says /a/;/a/ is *a*) while forming the symbol in the memory box.

Nathan Adams Elementary–Dallas, TX **Kindergarten**

Language experience charts

The teacher writes student-dictated responses to create:

- Student versions of a story
- Cooking projects, including recipes of sequential steps to follow in preparing a dish
- Class stories on given topics using format books, such as *Brown Bear, Brown Bear.* Each child adds a verse to the story.
- Thank you notes to parents, volunteers, etc.
- Field trip follow up

Nathan Adams Elementary–Dallas, TX **First Grade**

Print-rich environment schoolwide

Children's written work is on display throughout the building thus providing others the opportunity to see inside the classroom simply by walking through the halls. Teachers, parents, students, and guests to the building learn more new information and vocabulary from hall displays. Students' works are recognized and praised during morning announcements.

Nathan Adams Elementary–Dallas, TX **Kindergarten**

Class-authored books

We create a variety of class books. We often take predictable, repetitive stories and adapt them for our students to continue. For example, students create an additional action verse to replace, "Run, run as fast as you can. You can't catch me. I'm the gingerbread man." Students choose their own action word and illustrate their new verse. After sharing the ideas, we bind the pages to form a predictable, self-made book. We also create books from our classroom daily news written on chart tablets or printed from the computer at the end of each month. Since the students dictate the news each morning and we read the news again as a class, they are familiar with the words in the book, therefore they can read them more fluently. Students also find familiar labels to create word books. Finally, we model the writing process in an original story or report to create a big book. Students are familiar with the content and enjoy reading the books frequently for pleasure.

Cedar Valley Elementary–Killeen, TX **First Grade**

3. Reading Aloud

Children have opportunities to hear good stories and informational books read aloud daily.

Listening to and talking about books on a regular basis provides children with demonstrations of the benefits and pleasures of reading. Story reading introduces children to new words, new sentences, new places, and new ideas. They also hear the kinds of vocabulary, sentences, and text structures they find in their school books and are expected to read and understand. Reading aloud to children everyday and talking about books and stories supports and extends oral language development and helps students connect oral language to written language.

Specific Classroom Activities

Expression reading

For at least 15 minutes daily, teachers read orally to their students. Teachers select interesting stories or informational books that are of high interest to the students. As the teacher reads, she/he models by using intonation, expression, body language, and sound devices of rhyme and rhythm, thus setting the example of how to become a better reader. The students can then relate to reading as being a fun and pleasurable activity that opens up a whole new world.

Waitz Elementary–Mission, TX **PK through Second Grade**

Interactive computer stories

The children listen to the story or read along as the computer highlights each word. Children can highlight individual words for the computer to read. By manipulating the mouse, children can also move animated characters and objects and/or alter the plot. Some programs require older students to read the story on their own and then answer comprehension questions.

Waitz Elementary–Mission, TX **PK through Second Grade**

"Spotlight" books and authors

Our librarian focuses on one children's-literature author each month. During the month, the author's picture is displayed in the library, and the children learn interesting facts about the author's life during their library time. On another library day, the librarian may read aloud a selection by the author or present tapes or cassettes of his or her work for listening and viewing. All of the books by that author that are in our library are displayed for the children to choose and read. Library time may also be used for the students to dramatize a story by the author; make an illustration or design a book cover for one of the selected author's books; or write a letter to the author.

Atlanta Primary–Atlanta, TX **Librarian**

Retell stories

We use focus poems or stories from a variety of sources for the following activity. The students love it, and they learn so much. After a story has been told to the class, the students take turns "playing teacher" using drama and/or props to retell the story. The "teacher" then checks to determine if the class understands the story.

Scotsdale Elementary–El Paso, TX **Kindergarten**

Flannel board stories: teddy bear tales

We use focus poems and Accelerated Reading stories in a thematic approach. This activity can be done in large groups or in learning centers. As we are studying teddy bears, the children use flannel boards to tell "teddy bear tales." The children use the traditional Three Bears flannel characters and the teddy bear counters to retell their own stories.

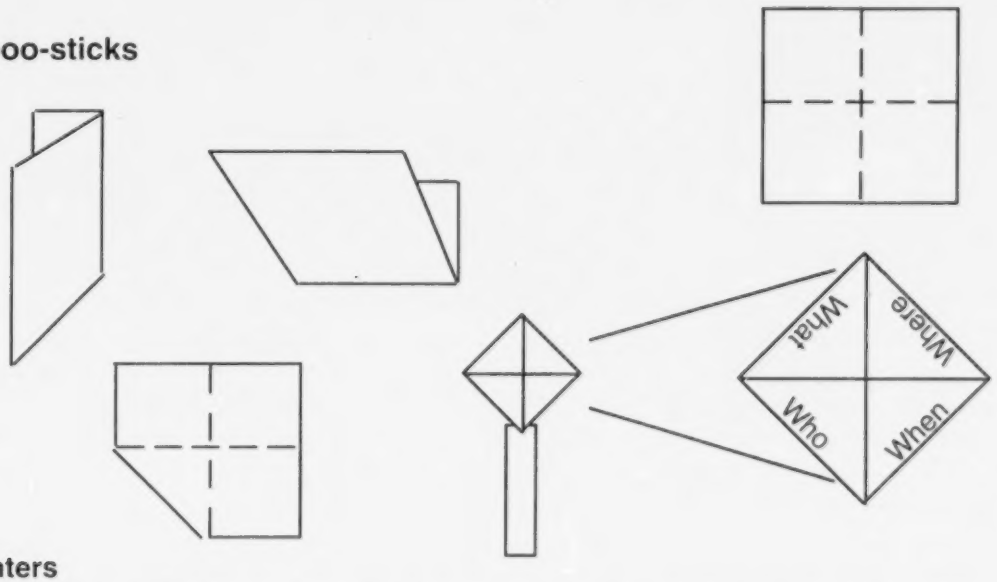
Scotsdale Elementary–El Paso, TX **Kindergarten**

Puppet plays: peek-a-boo sticks

We do many types of puppet plays including the following activity. After the following is completed, the children present their own puppet play using the finished product. Have the children fold a 9" square into fourths and fold each corner to the center. On the outside of each flap, have children write *Who? What? When? Where?* Attach a tagboard handle. Have the children choose and read a focus poem or an Accelerated Reading story. Each child writes the story or poem title in the center of the open square. On the inside of the flap, the student writes the answer to that question. On the section below the flap, the student draws a picture showing the answer to that question.

Scotsdale Elementary-El Paso, TX **First Grade or Second Grade**

Peek-a-boo-sticks



Listening centers

An excellent resource for kindergarten listening centers is the *Leap Frog Series `90* developed by Crandall ISD. Our teachers use this series of songs to reinforce association of sound/symbol and sound discrimination. To reinforce sound association for the letter *o*, the teacher and students sing: "Oh, here is a question I'd like to know. What can you name that begins with an *O*? Oxen and otters, ostriches too. Oranges and olives, and octopus stew." A cooking activity follows called Fried Octopus Wieners. Cut each wiener so it has 8 legs. Leave an uncut part on one end to represent the head. Fry in hot grease. Watch legs curl around to resemble the "octopus."

Atlanta Primary-Atlanta, TX **Kindergarten**

Reading buddies

At the fifth-grade level, students are paired with first-grade students to read to during their library period. The fifth-grade students provide guidance and "time for listening" and keep a log of first-grade students' reading progress.

Downs Elementary-San Benito, TX **First Grade and Fifth Grade**

Repetition stories

The teacher reads the story "Jump Frog Jump." The teacher tells the student that she will read the story again. She tells the students to listen to the part of the story that is being repeated over and over. After reading, the teacher asks, "What part of the story did you hear being repeated?" (Response is "Jump Frog Jump.") The teacher gives the students a popsicle stick with a picture of a frog taped on it. The teacher tells the students that she will read the story again. The teacher says, "When I pause, hold up your frog and say, Jump Frog Jump." Students must make the frog move up and down.

Mading Elementary-Houston, TX **Kindergarten**

4. Phonemic Awareness

Children have opportunities to understand and manipulate the building blocks of spoken language.

Awareness that sentences are made up of groups of separate words and that words are made up of separate sounds is fundamental to the understanding that oral language is represented in written form. The ability to think about words as a sequence of sounds and to manipulate the individual sounds is an important step in learning to read an alphabetic language. In fact, research has shown conclusively that children's phonemic awareness is one of the best predictors of their success in learning to read.

General Instructional Activities

The kinds of instructional activities that promote understanding and use of the building blocks of spoken language can be generally described to include the following:

- Language games that teach children to identify rhyming words and to create rhymes
- Activities to promote understanding that spoken sentences are made up of groups of words, that words are made up of syllables, and that words can be broken down into separate sounds
- Auditory activities in which children manipulate the sounds of words, separate or segment the sounds of words, blend sounds, delete sounds, or substitute new sounds for those deleted

Specific Classroom Activities

Choral word blending

We play a game with the students by speaking various words. We say each word in pieces, first the initial consonant, then the remainder of the word. Students chorally speak the entire word as a whole. For example, the teacher says, "/l/...unch." Students reply, "lunch." This can also be done with the help of a puppet. Pretend the puppet has difficulty saying the word as a whole, and the class' job is to help the puppet say the word correctly. The reverse process can also be done with the puppet for practice with segmentation. The teacher says the entire word, and the puppet copies the teacher but omits the first phoneme. For example, the teacher says, "cow." The puppet replies, "ow." Students can then predict the puppet's response to additional words.

Cedar Valley Elementary-Killeen, TX **First Grade**

Jingles, rhymes, and words

We teach the children various songs and rhymes, such as "Willaby Wallaby Woo," "Apples and Bananas," and "Down By the Bay." Students are able to play with phonemes by substituting sounds to complete the lyrics as the class sings. In "Willaby Wallaby Woo" and "Down By the Bay," students change the initial sounds of words to create rhymes at the end of phrases. Students predict and suggest new endings with each singing. In "Apples and Bananas," students substitute medial long and short vowel sounds. Students predict the words as they learn the song the first time, then practice further at later times.

Cedar Valley Elementary-Killeen, TX **First Grade**

Echo and blending sounds

The teacher starts the game by saying sound /b/, and children repeat sound /b/. The teacher says another sound /a/. Children repeat that sound /a/. The teacher says another sound /g/. Children repeat sound /g/. Children blend all three sounds together to make a word. The teacher guides the activity by indicating with a signal whose turn it is to speak. Ex. The teacher says, "my turn." The teacher signals, "your turn."

Mading Elementary-Houston, TX **Kindergarten**

Echo a sound (lyric)

The teacher says: "What's the sound that starts these words: turtle, time, and teeth?" Students say: "/T/ is the sound that starts these words: turtle, time and teeth. With a /t/ /t/ here and a /t/ /t/ there, here a /t/, there a /t/, everywhere a /t/ /t/. A /t/ is the sound that starts these words: turtle, time, and teeth."

Mading Elementary-Houston, TX **Kindergarten**

Nursery rhymes

Children are taught various songs and rhymes, such as "Humpty Dumpty," " Twinkle Twinkle Little Star," and "Little Boy Blue." These are usually introduced to the students using picture cards, puppets, and music with emphasis placed on the sounds and lyrics of the nursery rhyme being taught. Initial sounds, endings, and blends, as well as long and short vowels, are emphasized to allow the students to play with phonemes as they sing in class.

Heights Elementary-Laredo, TX **Kindergarten**

Following directions

Students practice phonemic awareness through directional activities such as the Alphabet Toss. The teacher says a letter of the alphabet and tosses the ball to a student. The child says a word that begins with that letter. Then he/she says another letter and tosses the ball to someone else. Whoever catches the ball has to say a word that begins with the letter given by the person who tossed the ball. Students must listen carefully for the new letter and follow multiple directions to be successful at this game.

Atlanta Primary-Atlanta, TX **First Grade**

Songs and poems

To enhance phonemic awareness and recognize short vowel sounds, we use vowel songs. One example that we use is a song to the tune of "Are You Sleeping?" The song contains words with short /a/ sounds. There are verses that coordinate with each vowel sound. Ex.

Where is short *a*, Where is short *a*?
Here I am. Here I am.
I am in a hat rack, cracker jacks and fat cats.
/a/ /a/ /a/ /a/ /a/ /a/ /a/

Songs adapted from *Carson Dellosa.*
Atlanta Primary-Atlanta, TX **First Grade**

Syllable bounce

This game reinforces the syllable concept by bouncing a ball for the number of syllables in a word. With his/her eyes closed, ask a child to pick a picture out of a container. The child identifies a picture and bounces the ball the correct number of syllables. For instance, the child would bounce twice while saying slowly "pen-cil."
Mading Elementary-Houston, TX **Kindergarten**

Deletion of letters

We play a game from the *Lundberg Phonemic Awareness Manual* called Spider's Web. This activity reduces words to beginning and ending sounds (not spellings). Children sit in a circle, and the teacher explains that sometimes when you take a sound away from a word, it makes a new word. The teacher gives the first word and rolls a ball of yarn to the first child. The child responds with the initial sound of the word given by the teacher. (e.g., The teacher says "mice," and a student responds /m/.) The first child holds onto the end of the yarn and sends the ball to the next child who responds with the new word (e.g., "ice"). Teacher says the next word as the ball of yarn is rolled to another child, creating a web. The children should practice with the spider web several times before doing the game. Playing the Spider Web game may be more manageable in small groups because less time is spent re-rolling yarn and distances are shorter. (Refer to the manual for a list of word possibilities.)
Dyess Elementary-Abilene, TX **First Grade**

Letter-sound relationships

In kindergarten, Eric Carle's *Very Hungry Caterpillar* is excellent for teaching the /k/ sound. Have the children cup their hands to make a "c" and chompi by slightly opening and closing the "c" and saying the /k/ sound. A fun art project for reinforcement is a button caterpillar with hole-punched leaves and a real twig.

The poem "Alligator Pie" makes children hungry, so baking their very own alligator pie is an excellent opportunity to learn the /a/ sound. Children will never forget the /a/ sound!

The hard /g/ sound is easy when children garden! They plant both vegetables and flowers—a feast

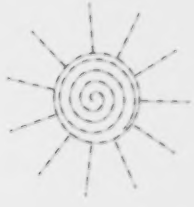
for their eyes and their tummies. They also have a Guess What? box and try to guess what /g/ item is inside. The children also do a number of activities with grapes: they make raisins from grapes; they perform a taste test on different varieties of grapes to identify their favorite; and they graph the results of their taste test. To create a class graph, each student colors and cuts out a picture of a cluster of grapes to indicate their favorite color (green, purple, red); each student's cluster is pasted on a teacher-prepared graph to illustrate the results of the taste test.

Downs Elementary-San Benito, TX **Kindergarten**

Rhyming patterns

- Books, poems, songs with children—the teacher leaves off the rhyming word and children fill in.
- Class books—children enjoy doing their own version of *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* (Martin/Carle).
- Rhyming word books—each child contributes a pair of rhymes. These are collected by the teacher and bound into a class book of rhymes.
- Rhyming show and tell—two items with names that rhyme (a sack and a tack) are concealed. The teacher reveals one of the items (sack) and asks the children to guess the concealed item by thinking of names of things that rhyme with "sack."
- Rhyming line up—children may line up when they hear a word that rhymes with their name.
- Secret password—teacher gives a key word, and the child gives a rhyming word before passing through the door.
- Flip book—a picture is glued on the top flap of a flip book, and the child draws a rhyming picture underneath.
- Draw scene on chalkboard—child may erase part of the picture that rhymes:

"You'll be number one
If you erase the _____."



Downs Elementary-San Benito, TX **Kindergarten through First Grade**

Rhyming with seasonal characters

This activity encourages multiple rhymes for words. For this game, children are seated in a circle, and the teacher has a seasonal cutout attached to a tongue depressor. The teacher begins by saying, "The snowman is looking for a rat." The cutout is passed to the next child who must make up a rhyme using the same sentence. The snowman is looking for a hat. When the group runs out of rhymes, the teacher introduces a new word. (The snowman is looking for a log.) Cutouts can be changed during the year (witch, turkey, Santa Claus, snowman, valentine, Easter bunny).

Mading Elementary-Houston, TX **Kindergarten**

5. Alphabetic Knowledge

Children have opportunities to learn about and manipulate the building blocks of written language.

Children must also become expert users of the building blocks of written language. Knowledge of alphabetic letters (graphemes) leads to success with learning to read. This includes the use, purpose, and function of letters.

General Instructional Activities

Instruction that helps children learn about the essential building blocks of written language includes the following:

- Alphabetic knowledge activities in which children learn the names of letters and learn to identify them rapidly and accurately
- A variety of writing activities in which children learn to print the letters that they are learning to identify
- Writing activities in which children have the opportunity to experiment with and manipulate letters to make words and messages

Specific Classroom Activities

Journal writing

Teachers write daily events on a large chart tablet as part of the "morning message" activity. Students read the message with the teacher, identify letters, words and punctuation. For journal writing, students have the option to copy the morning message or respond to a teacher-directed writing task that is related to a thematic unit being used that day.

This activity enhances the students' ability in identifying:

- High-frequency words
- Capitalization/punctuation
- Complete sentences
- Days of the week
- Months of the year
- Spelling

Dellview Elementary-San Antonio, TX **Kindergarten**

Sound-letter recognition incorporated into cooking and art activities

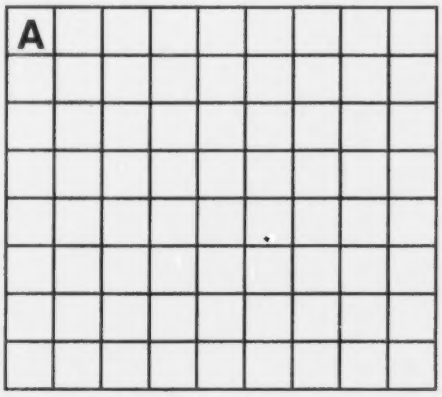
Cooking. The target letter/sound is *m*. Brainstorm a list of foods beginning with the letter *m* that can be placed on Mr. Mm's menu. Students name foods such as marshmallows, macaroni, meatballs, etc. Model write the foods on the menu and highlight the *m*'s with highlighting tape. Include the students in mixing Mr. Mm's mix. The mix contains mints, marshmallows, M&M's, and slices of Milky Way. Stress that we measure, mix, and munch.

Art. Duplicate a large uppercase and lowercase Mm on manila paper. The students cover the Mm's with macaroni. The macaroni Mm is great for tactile learners to trace with their finger.
Zavala Elementary-Grand Prairie, TX **Kindergarten**

Alphabetic stamps

Students use alphabet stamps and stamp the letters of their spelling or vocabulary words on a grid. They then cut each word out separately. Students can put the words in alphabetical order or sort them by the number of letters or by sounds. The words can also be used to form sentences.
Zavala Elementary-Grand Prairie, TX **Kindergarten**

Ex.



Manipulative activities using clay and food products

- Using alphabetic letters, the teacher writes the uppercase and lowercase letter on construction paper. Students glue beans, macaroni, etc., on the letters.
- Students use alphabet cookie cutters in Playdough.
- Using the letter of the week, students dip sponge letters into paint then press onto paper.
- Using individual chalkboards, children practice forming and tracing uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Each student has a sewing card with the letter of the alphabet on it. The student sews within the lines of the letter with yarn.
- Students roll clay into long, skinny ropes to form alphabetic letters.

Nathan Adams Elementary-Dallas, TX **Kindergarten**

Alphabet flash cards

- The student uses alphabet flash cards to form words and sentences. Pocket charts are utilized for holding the cards. Emphasis is placed on the importance of creating clear, accurate sentences. Flash cards with punctuation marks are used for sentences.

Nathan Adams Elementary-Dallas, TX **First Grade**

Letter game

Journey to Z (an alphabet strip is needed). Students choose how many letters that they want to say in order to be the first person to say (z). Two students play the game. First student A, B; second student C, D; first student E, F; second student G, H etc. The first person to say (z) is the winner.

Mading Elementary-Houston, TX **Kindergarten**

Poetry

Poetry is integrated into our thematic units for students to recite and sing. Ex: As part of the study of the letter *M*, we use this poem by Myra Cohn Livingston— "Reflections."

In the mirror
I can see
Lots of things
But mostly – ME!

Dellview Elementary-San Antonio, TX **Kindergarten**

6. Alphabetic Principle

Children have opportunities to learn the relationship between the sounds of spoken language and the letters of written language.

Increasing awareness in children of the sounds of spoken language and their familiarity with the letters of written language prepares them to understand the alphabetic principle — that written words are composed of patterns of letters that represent the sounds of spoken words. Effective instruction provides children with explicit and systematic teaching of sound-letter relationships in a sequence that permits the children to assimilate and apply what they are learning.

General Instructional Activities

Instruction that helps children understand the alphabetic principle and learn the most common relationships between sounds and letters includes the following:

- Alphabetic awareness activities in which children learn that printed words are made up of patterns of letters
- Lessons in sound-letter relationships that are organized systematically and that provide as much practice and review as is needed
- Activities in which children combine and manipulate letters to change words and spelling patterns

Specific Classroom Activities

Blending consonant plus vowel patterns

Teachers use a Go Fishing game to provide students practice sounding out words with the C-V-C (consonant, vowel, consonant) pattern. Pictures that illustrate animals or objects that have names with a CVC pattern (hat, tub, mat, cat) are glued on fish-shaped cutouts with a paper clip attached. The name of the object is written below the picture. A child fishes with a small magnet attached to a string. The child looks at the picture and word and sounds out each phoneme.

rat
r-a-t

After the child sounds out the word, another child answers with a sentence: "You caught a _____." The child who answers is the next person to "go fishing," etc.

Mading Elementary-Houston, TX **Kindergarten**

Build a word

Children are given a certain number of letters they will need to use to spell and build a given set of words. The teacher tells the children to spell "at," then to add a letter to make "sat." Then children are asked to change the /s/ to an /h/ and tell what new word has been built. This activity continues until a set of words is created. It is also possible to change the vowel and the ending consonant to create new words.

Zavala Elementary-Grand Prairie, TX **Kindergarten or First Grade**

Word play

Each student is provided with a set of alphabet letter cards. The students put the letters in the correct sequence to form the alphabet. Then the teacher shows a picture of a simple word like "mop." The students and teacher say the word and then repeat it slowly, unblending the sounds. The students choose the corresponding letters from their alphabet to spell the word. When first learning the sounds, students may only choose the initial sound. Later they work on medial and final sounds until they can spell the entire word. This is an excellent way to help kindergarten students learn ABC order, letter recognition, sound-symbol relationships, sound position, and even word recognition.

Atlanta Primary-Atlanta, TX **Kindergarten**

Games and activities focused on alphabetic order

- Using word families with different initial sounds, vocabulary words are written on index cards for the students to place in alphabetical order.
- The teacher selects five students in the class who are featured for the week. The names of the five are alphabetized by first name, then last name.
- The teacher makes flash cards with one letter of the alphabet on each card. The upper case letter is on one side, the lowercase letter on the other. Students organize cards into alphabetical order considering use of upper/lower case letters.

Nathan Adams Elementary-Dallas, TX **First Grade and Second Grade**

Rhyming word families

- The teacher selects literature (*Good Night, Moon*). After reading the story orally to the class, students are asked to state any words from the story that rhyme .
- The teacher records the words on the board. The teacher displays a chart in the shape of a tall house with one word written at the top. Beneath that word, words that rhyme with it are recorded by the teacher as they are offered by students.
- Rhyming word families are made by substituting many different beginning sounds so that the words formed are both real and make-believe.
- When the teacher reads a book to the class which does not feature rhyming words, the same procedure is used by choosing an interesting word within the story to make word families.

Nathan Adams Elementary-Dallas, TX **First Grade and Second Grade**

Individual wall picture cards

The teacher utilizes brightly colored picture cards representing people, places, and objects. Picture cards are displayed either on the wall or on the chalkboard. These pictures are visible to all students. During a phonics activity, the teacher refers to these pictures and emphasizes initial letters with sounds. The children are asked to identify the letter with the respective sound by listening to the teacher and repeating the target sound. Children work individually, or in some cases, in cooperative working groups. Children are then asked to trace and write the letter on paper, allowing them to learn which printed letter goes with which corresponding sound.

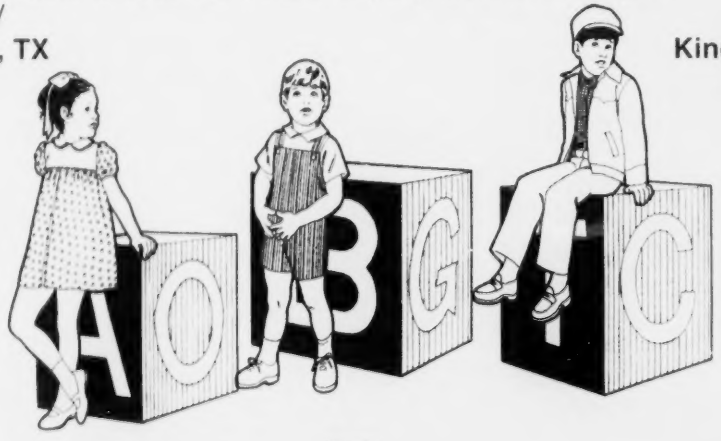
Heights Elementary-Laredo, TX **Kindergarten**

Add-a-letter

Teacher-made individual word-builder pocket charts are made from manila folders. Letters are placed in plastic bags. The teacher says a word ("bag"). Students say the word. The teacher tells the students to find the letters in the plastic bag to spell the word and place them in the word builder pocket chart. Next the teacher says the word "tag." Students find the letter for the /t/. Students remove /b/ and place /t/ in the word builder pocket chart.

Variation: Alphabet cereal is placed in bags. Butcher paper is placed on each desk. The teacher says a word. Students find the letters to spell the word and place them on the desk.
Ex. "fat" – find /f/, "cat" – find /c/

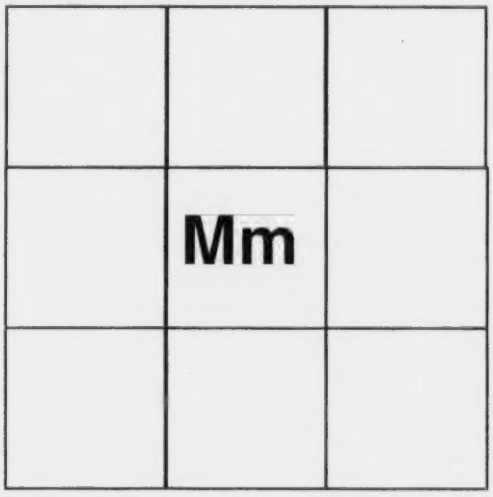
Mading Elementary-Houston, TX **Kindergarten**



Picture cards

We use picture cards to play games with students. Often students match pictures that have the same beginning sounds and ending sounds. As we introduce the various letters, we play games to discriminate the new letter sound. The cards are used to match rhyming picture cards with a word card. We also clap out the picture and sort how many parts/syllables there are in the word. We make game boards using poster board to help assess the students' understanding. The game boards are divided into nine sections with a letter sound in the center box. Students sort through the picture cards and match the picture card to the corresponding game board.

Zavala Elementary-Grand Prairie, TX **First Grade**



Letter tiles

Whole Group Activity: To help introduce the vocabulary words in a particular story during circle time, the teacher uses magnetic alphabet letters and a cookie sheet to display them. Children help the teacher arrange letters to form a word.

Small Group Activity (four to six students at a time): The teacher uses individual sets of cards for each student. The teacher models or pose problems to the group. Then each child will use his/her own sets of letter cards to respond to the teacher.

Letter tiles are used to introduce and practice letter recognition, word families, and rhyming patterns.

Dellview Elementary-San Antonio, TX **First Grade**

7. Decoding Strategies

Children have opportunities to learn decoding strategies.

Efficient decoding strategies permit readers to quickly and automatically translate the letters or spelling patterns of written words into speech sounds so that they can identify words and gain rapid access to their meanings. Children must learn to identify words quickly and effortlessly so that they can focus on the meaning of what they are reading.

Research indicates that good readers rely primarily on print rather than on pictures or context to help them identify familiar words and to figure out words they have not seen before. For this reason, it is important that children learn effective sounding-out strategies that will allow them to decode words they have never seen in print. Some strategies of decoding instruction focus primarily on the relationships between sounds and letters; others combine letter-sound practice with word families, with word parts (Ex: onsets and rhymes), and with blending activities. More advanced decoding strategies focus on structural analysis, the identification of root words, and prefixes and suffixes.

Instruction should introduce "irregular" words in a reasonable sequence and use these words in the program's reading materials. It is important to realize, however, that essentially all words must become "sight words" — words children identify quickly, accurately, and effortlessly.

General Instructional Activities

Effective decoding instruction is explicit and systematic and can include the following:

- Practice in decoding and identifying words that contain the letter-sound relationships children are learning to read and need for reading and writing
- Practice activities that involve word families and rhyming patterns
- "Word play" activities in which children change beginning, middle, or ending letters of related words, thus changing the words they decode and spell
- Introduction of phonetically "irregular" words in practice activities and stories

Specific Classroom Activities

Blending

Blending sounds together to make words is a critical step in reading. Blending practice begins as soon as the student knows two sounds. The teacher models the practice by pointing to the /ă/ in "am" and saying /aaa/ (short /a/ sound) for two seconds, and then by pointing to the /m/ in "am" and saying /mmm/ again for two seconds. Students then say the sounds (holding each for two seconds as the teacher points to the letters). Students are then asked to say the word the "fast way." The students say "am." The teacher repeats the task and then allows individual students the opportunity to "sound out" a word.

Wesley Elementary-Houston, TX **Kindergarten and First Grade**

Teaching ending buildups

- kiss
- kissed

Children read the word (kiss) the "fast way" and the teacher says, "If this word is kiss, then this word must be kiiisss...," and points to the "d". Children say, " kissed."

Wesley Elementary-Houston, TX **Kindergarten and First Grade**

In a similar activity, the teacher places a list of words on the board. She says, "You're going to read these words. Then I'm going to change each word." The students read the words out loud.

- yell
- ask
- lock
- help

The teacher then adds "ed" to the end of each word. The students read the words.

- yelled
- asked
- locked
- helped

The teacher may then erase the "ed" on every word or erase "ed" on some of the words and have the children read the list again.

Wesley Elementary-Houston, TX **Third Grade**

Reading words the fast way

Students read words (the fast way) in a column without sounding them out. This activity is designed to help build fluency and automaticity in reading.

Wesley Elementary-Houston, TX **First Grade through Third Grade**

Rhyming stories

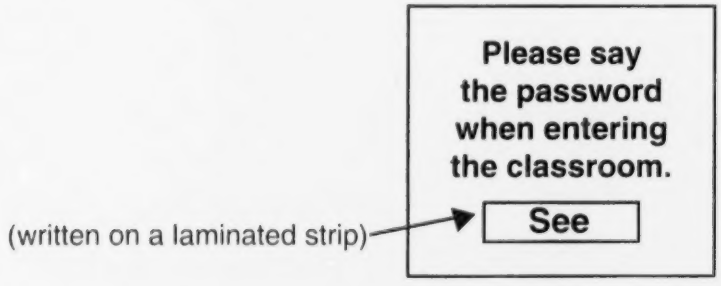
The teacher writes the word "at" on the chalkboard. Students sound out the word The teacher writes (onset) "r" in front of word "at." The students sound out rat. The teacher tells the students to think of other words that rhyme with "rat". A sample response is "cat." The teacher writes "cat" and says each letter aloud as she writes the word. The teacher reads "rat, cat," stressing the rhyme. The teacher asks, "What other words rhyme with rat and cat?" A sample response is "hat". When all of the words have been written on the board, the teacher tells the students that they can begin writing their story. Students dictate the sentences, and the teacher writes them on the board. The teacher reads the story and students tell the teacher the words that rhyme. The teacher underlines the rhyming words.

The teacher reads a familiar nursery rhyme and writes the nursery rhyme on the board, omitting the rhyming word. The teacher reads the nursery rhyme and the students must supply the missing word. (The word must rhyme.)

Mading Elementary-Houston, TX **Kindergarten**

Word game to learn sight words

Prepare a sign on poster board and laminate it on the classroom door.
(see illustration)



Students say the password when entering the classroom every morning, after lunches and after restroom breaks. Words are changed on the door weekly. The teacher models sentences using the sight words. Students dictate sentences using these words. The teacher writes them on the board. Students illustrate these words in their journals. After the words are taken off the door, they are placed on the word wall.

Mading Elementary-Houston, TX **Kindergarten**

Nursery rhymes

To promote literacy, nursery rhymes are utilized in the first grade classrooms to enhance expression and fluency. Additionally, they are used to reinforce family words for phonetic skill development. Nursery rhymes are available on large, colorful charts. A large, clear acetate cover is placed over the chart. Students use erasable markers to circle words that represent certain patterns as instructed by the teacher.

Downs Elementary-San Benito, TX **First Grade**

8. Writing and Spelling

Children have opportunities to write and relate their writing to spelling and reading.

As children learn to read and write words, they become aware of how these words are spelled. Children's increasing awareness of spelling patterns hastens their progress in both reading and writing. In the early grades, spelling instruction must be coordinated with the program of reading instruction. As children progress, well-organized, systematic lessons in spelling will be beneficial.

General Instructional Activities

Activities for effective spelling instruction should include the following:

- Activities that are related to the words that children are reading and writing
- Proofreading activities
- An emphasis on pride in correct spelling
- Lessons that help children attend to spelling conventions in a systematic way
- Activities that surround children in words and make reading and writing purpose filled

Specific Classroom Activities

Handwriting activities integrated into reading lessons

An array of handwriting activities used in the classroom are integrated into the reading lessons. The teacher correlates handwriting activities with story selections from our state-adopted textbook. In the primary grades, manuscript letters, words, and phrases that pertain to story selections are introduced simultaneously with the story. For example, "Miss Rumphus," a third-grade selection, contains various compound words. This is taken into consideration when the students are given a handwriting activity.

Heights Elementary-Laredo, TX **First Grade through Third Grade**

Response log

For this activity, you can either use a spiral notebook or a folder with brads and notebook paper. Before the children read a story or before the teacher reads a story to the class, the children fold the paper in half lengthwise and make a prediction of what they think will happen in the story. Then they either listen to or read the story. Afterward they open the paper and write what actually happens in the story.

This is a good activity to keep for a portfolio on the children's growth, not only for reading comprehension but for their writing ability. As the year progresses, the children will be making more accurate predictions and their response of the actual happenings in the story will be more complete. A spelling record can also be taken from this activity.

Zavala Elementary-Grand Prairie, TX **First and Second Grade**

Spelling lists follow specific phoneme patterns

Spelling lists are taken from the basal reader. Ten additional words using the same pattern are added to the list. Students are given a dictation test where they write the words, cover it, write the words again, fold, and write from memory.

Dyess Elementary-Abilene, TX **Second Grade**

Dictate	Copy	Memory

Journal writing

Students write daily responses to the literature in spiral notebooks. The writing consists of thematic topics or responses to the literature used in the reading lesson. They are also given opportunities for free-choice writing topics.

Dellview Elementary-San Antonio, TX **First Grade**

Daily news in kindergarten

Use a chart tablet to write one sentence that the child has dictated as his/her daily news. (Ex: Mary went to Six Flags with her family.) The words of the sentence should be written and spoken simultaneously. As the year progresses, the words should be sounded out and written simultaneously. Skills incorporated in daily news are: directionality, tracking words with a pointer, punctuation, capitalization, identifying how many words are in a sentence, word recognition, compound words, and vocabulary.

Students enjoy reading the daily news throughout the year. Hang the daily news charts so that students can continue to read them. In the second semester classroom daily news traveling books (books taken home by one student, brought back the next day and taken home by another student) can be made. The students' news can be typed on a page and illustrated. The pages are bound and sent home to be shared with parents.

Zavala Elementary-Grand Prairie, TX **Kindergarten**

Creation of reading and spelling dictionaries

Prior to any writing activity correlated with literature, social studies, or science, we thoroughly discuss the material. As discussion progresses, the teacher records key words in either list form or as part of a semantic map. Children are asked to add words they may need to use in their writing, and the teacher records requests. Children refer to these word banks as they write, and the teacher may continue to add words as needed. This reading/writing "dictionary" is displayed throughout the year for future reference.

Dyess Elementary-Abilene, TX **First Grade**

Proofreading of creative writing

Students are asked to write on a certain topic. Steps in the writing process are followed with an emphasis on proofreading skills. Proofreading marks are learned and used by the students when they proofread either their own written compositions or those belonging to classmates. Written composition topics are chosen by relating them to reading selections, by correlating them to a thematic unit, or by relating them to a special school activity, such as Red Ribbon Week, Fire Prevention, Thanksgiving, or Career Awareness.

Heights Elementary-Laredo, TX **Second Grade**

Stories are like fairy gold. The more you give away the more you have. • Polly McGuire

Writing journals about reading selections

Students are asked to keep a daily journal in which they compile a collection of stories. Some teachers have students use a spiral notebook for this, others make their own personalized booklet for each student. Upon reading a given story selection, either from the assigned textbook or from a library book, students are asked to write about details of the story, personal experiences similar to those in the story, characters and their emotions, the setting of the story, and their personal opinions about the story.

Heights Elementary-Laredo, TX **Second Grade**

9. Fluency Development

Children have opportunities to practice accurate and fluent reading in decodable stories.

The words in decodable stories do emphasize the sound-letter relationships the children are learning. While many predictable and patterned books provide children with engaging language and print experiences, these books may not be based on the sound-letter relationships the children are learning.

Decodable stories provide children with the opportunity to practice what they are learning about letters and sounds. As children learn to read words, sentences, and stories fluently, accurately, and automatically, they no longer have to struggle to identify words and are free to pay closer attention to the meaning.

Research asserts that most children benefit from direct instruction in decoding, complemented by practice with simply written decodable stories. Further, for some children this sort of systematic approach is critical. Stories should "fit" the child's reading level. Beginning readers should be able to read easily 90 percent or more of the words in a story, and after practice, should be able to do so quickly, accurately, and effortlessly.

Specific Classroom Activities

Practice reading stories aloud

Children have the opportunity to read aloud every day from stories written to provide practice with the letters and sounds they are learning. This daily practice develops automaticity and fluency. The children receive instructive feedback on all errors made during their oral reading. Teachers do individual checks for rate and accuracy throughout the year so that the children have practice reading a longer passage. The child must read a selection within a specified period of time and must make no more than a specified number of errors. The teacher records the time taken to complete the reading and the number of errors to provide a picture of the child's progress throughout the year.

Wesley Elementary-Houston, TX **All Grades**

Phonetic mini-books

We use the phonetic mini-books from our Open Court reading series for reading groups, assessment, and individual practice. These allow us to focus on decoding skills and to determine students' current decoding abilities. The word patterns allow children to decode new words in the pattern more quickly and to increase familiarity of the words and sounds. The actual instruction with these books comes during small-group time for focused skill instruction and practice. The teacher helps the students identify common sounds and spelling patterns. The story is then read round-robin style in the small group. Students can then take books back to their seats for reading practice at their own pace.

Cedar Valley Elementary-Killeen, TX **First Grade**

10. Independent Reading

Children have opportunities to read and comprehend a wide assortment of books and other texts.

As children develop effective decoding strategies and become fluent readers, they must read books and other texts that are less controlled in their vocabulary and sentence structure. They learn to use word order (syntax) and context to interpret words and understand their meanings. Soon, they become enthusiastic, independent readers of all kinds of written material, including books, magazines, newspapers, computer screens, and more! Providing children with a great many books, both narrative and informational, is of primary importance. Classroom and campus libraries must offer children a variety of reading materials, some that are easy to read and others that are more challenging and of increasing difficulty and complexity. Children need access to many books that they can take home to read with family members.

General Instructional Activities

Classrooms that ensure wide reading provide the following:

- Daily time for self-selected reading
- Access to books children want to read in their classrooms and school libraries
- Access to books that can be taken home to be read independently or to family members

Specific Classroom Activities

Big Books

Big Books are available in our school library in an array of themes that support the skills and concepts that are taught in the classrooms. Students at all grade levels read Big Books for independent reading practice. Our third-fifth grade students use Big Books as teaching tools to enhance their

vocabularies and their knowledge. After reading commercially prepared Big Books, some students write and illustrate their own Big Books. This is done by binding plain, white sheets of large paper between a heavy-stock cover. Students then develop their story and illustrate their books. Upper-grade students then share their books by reading to students in the lower grades.
Downs Elementary-San Benito, TX **Kindergarten through Fifth Grade**

Pattern books

Pattern books are used frequently for independent reading. To reinforce the reading practice, teachers write the patterns on tagboard strips and then have the children put the story in order using sequencing skills. As a final step, the children illustrate the sentence strips and then post them on story boards around the classroom.
Scotsdale Elementary-El Paso, TX **First Grade**

Computer interactive books: *Wiggle Works*

We use the computer program, *Wiggle Works*, as an opportunity for independent reading practice. *Wiggle Works* is an interactive program that allows children to hear the texts of books and to write and illustrate responses to the stories. They can also write their own version of a story and hear it read to them by the computer. Students like to record themselves reading the printed texts and play back their recorded reading.
Scotsdale Elementary-El Paso, TX **Kindergarten**

11. Vocabulary Development

Children have opportunities to develop and comprehend new vocabulary through wide reading and direct vocabulary instruction.

Written language places greater demands on vocabulary knowledge among children than does their everyday spoken language. In fact, many of the new words children learn in a year are learned from concrete and meaningful experiences from being read to and as they read on their own.

It is obvious that the number of new words children learn from reading depends upon how much they read and that the amount children read varies enormously. Therefore, it is important that teachers read aloud to children and encourage them to do a great deal of voluntary and independent reading. In addition, during reading instruction, children should be encouraged to attend to the meanings of new words.

General Instructional Activities

Activities that promote the acquisition of vocabulary include the following:

- Wide reading of a variety of genres, both narrative and informational
- Instruction that provides explicit information about the meanings of words and about how they are used in the stories the children are reading
- Activities that involve children in analyzing context to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words in a reading passage
- Discussions of new words that occur during the course of a day, for example in books that have been read aloud by the teacher, in content-area studies, and in textbooks
- Activities that encourage children both to use words they are learning in their own writing and to keep records of interesting and related words

Specific Classroom Activities

Field trips with discussion following

Following a field trip to a local farm, the whole class discusses the animals and farm-related equipment observed. After class discussion, each child chooses his/her favorite farm animal and illustrates the animal on paper. After completing the illustration, each child dictates to the teacher one thing he/she learned about that animal. The pages are collected and compiled into a class book. The children rotate taking home the class book to share and discuss with their families.

Dyess Elementary-Abilene, TX **Kindergarten**

Visual prompts used to develop expressive language

We use pumpkins of various sizes and shapes during our fall unit to help develop expressive language. After much discussion, we have the students estimate the weight and circumference of a pumpkin. Children cut pieces of string the length they think will go around the pumpkin. Each child picks up the pumpkin and guesses how much it weighs while the teacher records each guess. The students are then given the opportunity to test their estimates by wrapping their string around the pumpkin. They must use their verbal skills to tell about their estimates. We weigh the pumpkin, and the students compare their estimated weight to the actual weight of the pumpkin. This is just one example of integration of curriculum (math, science, and language arts) to develop expressive language.

Dyess Elementary-Abilene, TX **Kindergarten**

Introduce new words in literature they are reading

In grades PK-K, words are introduced with manipulatives using the student's first language. The teacher describes the object being used and then the word is translated into English. In first st-third grades, vocabulary words are introduced by teaching the sounds first, then the word itself, and finally how the word is used in context. In upper grades, new words are discussed within the context of the literature.

Waitz Elementary-Mission, TX **PK through Third Grade**

Idioms

The G/T students at our school introduce idioms via live television to the student body. Any student who can define the idiom to an administrator and use it in context earns a chance to participate in a weekly drawing. Students are also encouraged to use the idioms in their daily conversation and writing.

Waitz Elementary-Mission, TX **PK through Second Grade**

Brainstorming word webs: spider and the fly

A generic spider web is drawn on laminated tagboard. This web will be used throughout the school year. We use subjects from focus poems or Accelerated Reader stories to brainstorm important vocabulary. After the spaces in the web are filled in with the words, the words are used for guided reading. These words are constantly modeled during the week. Hence, they serve as the children's vocabulary words.

Scotsdale Elementary-El Paso, TX **First Grade**

Developing social studies and science vocabulary: shared reading

We use Activities Integrating Math and Science (A.I.M.S.) and PEACE literature to introduce science and social studies vocabulary. Activities from A.I.M.S. and PEACE are integrated into the daily shared reading time. Word banks are made using the subject vocabulary.

Scotsdale Elementary-El Paso, TX **Second Grade**

12. Comprehension Strategies

Children have opportunities to learn and apply comprehension strategies as they reflect upon and think critically about what they read.

Written language is not just speech written down. Instead, written language offers new vocabulary, new language patterns, new thoughts, and new ways of thinking. Comprehension depends on the ability to identify familiar words quickly and automatically, which includes fluent reading, as well as the ability to figure out new words. But this is not enough.

Comprehension also depends upon the understanding of word meanings, the development of meaningful ideas from groups of words (phrases, clauses, and sentences), and the ability to draw inferences. It also depends upon the demands of the text (its concepts, its density) and the knowledge the reader brings to the text. Students' discussion of good books with their friends and classmates is one avenue for making these connections.

Such discussions will help children to appreciate and reflect on new aspects of written language and on the wide, wonderful world of print. For children to receive the greatest benefit and enjoyment from their reading, they must receive comprehension strategy instruction that builds on their knowledge of the world and of language.

- Activities that help children learn to preview selections, anticipate content, and make connections between what they will read and what they already know
- Instruction that provides options when understanding breaks down (for example, rereading, asking for expert help, and looking up words)
- Guidance in helping children compare characters, events, and themes of different stories
- Activities that encourage discussion about what is being read and how ideas can be linked (for example, to draw conclusions and make predictions)
- Activities that help children extend their reading experiences through the reading of more difficult texts with the teacher

Specific Classroom Activities

Summarize stories

We teach summarization in three general steps: identifying the beginning, middle, and end of a story; storymapping; and role-playing. We have the students first begin to identify the beginning, middle, and end of familiar read-aloud stories. We always encourage the students to respond in complete sentences, and we write what they have dictated. As they become proficient at this level, we introduce simplified storymapping of the beginning, middle, and end of those same stories. In this way the students see the connection between a "map" and the story parts they have already identified. Again, we asks the students to formulate sentences using the storymap. We gradually expand the storymap by asking for one or two details for each section of the map and recording the responses. In this way, students easily see how to sequentially summarize a story, step by step. Finally, we ask students to retell the story as a specific character. This also allows us to introduce point of view.

Cedar Valley Elementary-Killeen, TX **Second Grade**

Identify character attributes

We use many different ways of helping children identify character attributes. We use character graphs to more easily show students' similarities and differences. The beginning stage is to graph the students in the classroom by physical attributes, allowing them to move into specific groups (brown hair, tied shoes). We talk about other kinds of attributes, such as emotions and behavior. We read a story and have the students brainstorm attributes of a given character. Then we might give the students a construction paper cube or covered box (cereal, waffle), and direct them to illustrate specific attributes such as feelings, favorite things/hobbies/games/food, or any other pictures that help identify the character. The next level of understanding involves the students comparing themselves to the character in that story, recognizing likes and differences. A good way to do this is to provide each student with a simple body outline. (It can be a diagram or students may trace each other's body shapes.) Students divide the body into two halves (lengthwise) and record words and/or pictures of various attributes – the character on one half and themselves on the other. We have a discussion, identifying ways each is alike and different. This concept is finally extended to compare different characters within the story. Comparisons easily lead into predicting what a specific character might do based on his/her attributes.

Cedar Valley Elementary-Killeen, TX **Second Grade**

Predict outcomes

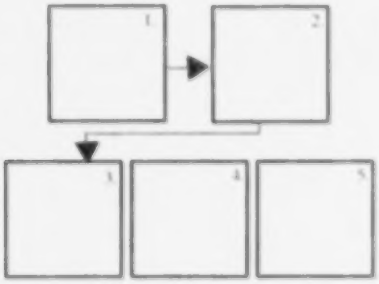
We like to use story cards that contain an action picture to introduce predicting outcomes. Students are given a card and asked to tell a short story about it – and about what happens next. This helps students begin to understand that they must use known facts to form their predictions. We often use cartoons with the last cell left blank so that students must predict the outcome. These are compared with the actual outcome. We ask students to change part of a familiar story and tell or write what might happen as a result. (What if the third little pig had been as lazy as his brothers?) We ask students to work cooperatively in groups of 4 or 5 to create stories. Each student in turn adds one sentence to the group story. The story comes to each student only once, but additional rounds can be added as the students become adept at group writing. As a culminating activity, we like to help the students write Pick-A-Path stories. This is best done in cooperative groups of 4 to 5 students. Each student is responsible for one event and two possible choices (outcomes). Only one choice for each event leads to a successful ending to the story. This activity reinforces the students' understanding that logical predictions must be based on known facts.

Cedar Valley Elementary-Killeen, TX **Second Grade**

Thinking maps

Thinking maps are simple graphic aids that demonstrate a pattern that assist the students in organizing their thoughts and ideas in a systematic way. There are eight graphic organizers and each map is based on one fundamental cognitive process (or thinking skill). For example, every student within every discipline uses the fundamental cognitive process of sequencing. The flow map enables students to organize the process of sequencing visually; students are taught how to use the flow map anytime they need to sequence information. In the lower grades, the teacher draws the pictures as students orally sequence the events. Then students retell the events using the pictures. As they progress, they will draw their own pictures or write words. Thus, the thinking maps are eight tools for students to use. There is one thinking map for each basic thinking process.

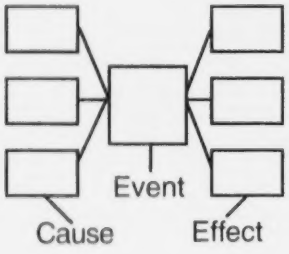
Waitz Elementary-Mission, TX **PK through Second Grade**



Cause-and-effect relationships

We use the multiflow thinking map to demonstrate that all the events in a story are interrelated. In the center of the map, the students write down a main event that occurred. Then, on the left side, they will write down the reasons why that event occurred (causes). On the right side, the students write down the different things that happened as a result of that event (effect). In this way, they are able to see a "chain reaction" of causes and effects and how they are all related to one another. If necessary, pictures can be used.

Waitz Elementary-Mission, TX **PK through Second Grade**



Use logic to problem solve

Each week the librarian selects a problem of the week for grade levels K–2. Each grade level gives the students a designated time to find a solution to the problem. They use the different problem-solving strategies taught in the classroom such as making an organized list, looking for a pattern, drawing a picture. Discussion of strategy used and solution follows. Teachers provide additional practice by giving the students a problem extension that restates the given problem with different data or a different question.

Waitz Elementary-Mission, TX **All Grades**

Thematic units

Dive Into Adventure is one of our thematic units. To begin the unit, the classroom environment reflects an underwater habitat with bulletin boards depicting various "watery" literature (*Alistair Underwater, Cyrus the Unsinkable Sea Serpent, The Rainbow Fish*) and learning stations containing hands-on water related activities (shell sorts, sand dollar rubbings, sand sculptures). Reading areas with beach blankets and fish floats are available during sustained silent-reading periods. A wealth of books are displayed throughout the room and are accessible and readable for each student's zone of proximal reading development. After the scene is set, teaching concepts correspond with the underwater theme. Mini-lessons on antonyms, synonyms, categorizing, mapping, graphing, sequencing, following directions, and details are taught with whale, sharks, or sea animal information. Writing includes paragraphs on whales, sharks, or other sea animals as well as acrostic poetry. Artwork accompanies the writings, and in these lessons, the focus is on listening skills and following directions. Writings and artwork are posted in the halls for all of the students to read and share. As a result of this creative unit, students and teachers have an "ocean" of fun learning to read, write, and share.

Atlanta Primary-Atlanta, TX **Second Grade**

Direct instruction of comprehension strategies

The Question and Answer game is one way to make students more aware of the different kinds of comprehension questions and how to find their answers in print. After reading a selection, the teacher divides the class into 5 cooperative learning groups. Each group chooses a leader. The leader draws a card from a stack turned face down. Each card has one of the categories of comprehension question written on it. For example, one card will say "main idea," "detail," "sequence," "word meaning," "cause and effect," "feelings," or "fact and fantasy." The group then makes up a question about the selection for the category drawn. The question from each group is then posted on the board. Each group must discuss and write the answer to each question posted. Groups get one point for a correct question and one point for each correct answer to the questions on the board. To break a tie, the teacher may call on tying groups to prove their answer. The winning team receives a prize or an extra 10 minutes at recess.

Atlanta Primary-Atlanta, TX **Second Grade**

Extension activity

"Sparkle words" are created to help students improve their reading and writing vocabulary. One simple way to create sparkle words is to use a computer word processor with a thesaurus capacity. You can enter humdrum, overworked words and access a large number of words with similar meanings. Another way to create sparkle words is to have the students generate a list of the words they commonly use in their writing. Then, as a class project, the teacher and students can brainstorm to add other words with similar meanings to the list. Advanced students may use a thesaurus to add to the word collection. An example of a sparkle word list might be: afraid, scared, frightened, terrified, fearful, or alarmed. These word lists may be written on small poster board sheets and placed on the wall in the classroom where they can be easily seen and used when students are reading, writing, or speaking. Using these words daily becomes a painless way for students to increase their word power.

Atlanta Primary-Atlanta, TX **Second Grade**

Atlas, globes, and maps

We correlate our social studies program with our basal reading program. Every time our classes read about any place on the earth, we locate it on an appropriate visual representation. One unit that is especially fun is the study of Africa (social studies) and African animals (science) that is integrated with Ann Jonas' story "The Trek." Children have already learned the names of the seven continents. We trace a large pattern of Africa onto manila paper (12" x 18") with black crayon. Then the children paint the entire sheet with appropriate water color paints (not tempera). They include green for the rain forest, brown for the desert areas, and blue for the oceans. "Africa" is written on the continent in black crayon, and the oceans and the Sahara Desert are also labeled.

Dyess Elementary-Abilene, TX **First Grade**

Shared reading followed by discussion

The teacher chooses from a form of reading such as read aloud, choral response, shared, or round robin. Shared reading, for example, is done in small groups with the teacher reading the entire story aloud, making predictions, and explaining character's emotions and motivations to help facilitate comprehension of the storyline. Next the teacher invites the students to read along with her either by reading the whole story or designated parts. Then the teacher rereads the story by modeling strategies and providing a think-aloud. Finally, the students reread the story independently and/or in partner reading.

Waitz Elementary-Mission, TX **First and Second Grade**

Newberry award novels

At the fifth-grade level, teachers require their students to read three Newberry Award novels during the school year. The semi-departmentalized setting allows the reading teachers to develop reading activities and provides opportunities for reading aloud. Reading skills are taught and/or reinforced through content.

Downs Elementary-San Benito, TX **Fifth Grade**

Sequencing

The teacher writes the main ideas of a story onto sentence strips. After the story has been read and reread, the children can either in a whole group, a small group, or individually arrange the sentences in the proper order of the story. They can then go to the story and check themselves to see if they were correct. If not, they can then rearrange them in the proper sequence. This activity can also be used as an assessment at the end of the lesson. If you choose, you might even want the children to write the sentences in center time.

Another way for the children to sequence a story is to fold a manila sheet of paper into fourths and let them write a sentence or draw a picture (or maybe both) in each quarter showing what happened first, second, next, and last in the story.

Zavala Elementary-Grand Prairie, TX **First and Second Grade**

Cause and effect

To teach cause and effect, we often use books such as *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, and have children identify the effect as we go along in the book. When we finish, we take manila paper and fold it in half. On the outside of it, we put a cause like dark clouds, and children have to open the book and write and draw what will happen—it will rain.

To make a class book, we take seven or eight sheets of paper and fold each sheet so that they look like layers. Each child or group of children tell one thing that happens that would cause something else, patterning their idea after *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie, If You Give a Moose a Muffin, and The Day Jimmy's Boa Ate the Wash.*

Zavala Elementary-Grand Prairie, TX **First and Second Grade**

Reading Spotlight Schools

ESC Region I

Angie Lehmann
ESC Reading Liaison
210-383-5611

1900 West Schunior
Edinburg, Texas 78539-2234
210-318-3566 FAX

Downs Elementary–EE-5
Rogelio Cano, Principal
San Benito Consolidated ISD

1302 N. Dick Dowling
San Benito, Texas 78586
956-361-6720

Heights Elementary–1-5
Sylvia Conchas, Interim Principal
Laredo ISD

1208 Market St.
Laredo, Texas 78040
210-795-3970

Carl Waitz Elementary–PK-6
J. D. Villarreal, Principal
Mission Consolidated ISD

1201 Brice St.
Mission, Texas 78572
956-580-4552

ESC Region IV

Bebe Hood
ESC Reading Liaison
713-744-6514

7145 West Tidwell
Houston, Texas 77092
713-744-6514 FAX

Mading Elementary–EE-5
Beverly Cage, Principal
Houston ISD

8511 Crestmont
Houston, Texas 77033
713-732-3560

Wesley Elementary–PK-5
Wilma Rimes, Principal
Houston ISD

800 Dillard
Houston, Texas 77091
713-696-2860

ESC Region VIII

Gwen Smith
ESC Reading Liaison
903-572-8551

P.O. Box 1894
Mt. Pleasant, TX 75456
903-572-8203 FAX

Atlanta Elementary–3-5
John York, Principal
Atlanta ISD

902 ABC Ln.
Atlanta, Texas 75551
903-796-7164

Atlanta Primary–EE-2
Gus Schuhmann, Principal
Atlanta ISD

505 Rabbit Blvd.
Atlanta, Texas 75551
903-796-8115

ESC Region X

Nancy Slaughter
ESC Reading Liaison
972-231-6301

P.O. Box 831300
Richardson, Texas 75083
972-231-3642 FAX

Nathan Adams Elementary–PK-6
Cathy Bratton, Principal
Dallas ISD

12600 Welch Rd.
Dallas, Texas 75244
972-308-8950

Zavala Elementary–K-5
Sharon Milham, Principal
Grand Prairie ISD

3501 Mark Dr.
Grand Prairie, Texas 75051
972-642-0448

ESC Region XII

Carolyn Hill
ESC Liaison
817-666-0707

P.O. Box 23409
Waco, Texas 76702
817-666-0823 FAX

Cedar Valley Elementary–EE-5
Lucille Husung, Principal
Killeen ISD

4801 Chantz
Killeen, Texas 76542
254-680-2505

ESC Region XIV

Susan Anderson
ESC Reading Liaison
915-675-8600

1850 Highway 351
Abilene, Texas 79601
915-675-8659 FAX

Dyess Elementary–K-5
David Jones, Principal
915-690-3795

Abilene ISD
Dyess Air Force Base
Abilene, Texas 79607

ESC Region XIX

Michelle Jackson
ESC Reading Liaison
915-780-1919

P.O. Box 10716
El Paso, Texas 79997
915-780-6537 FAX

Scotsdale Elementary–EE-6
Ann Bolte, Principal
915-598-2421

Ysleta ISD
2901 McRae
El Paso, Texas 79925

ESC Region XX

Candace Anderson
ESC Reading Liaison
210-299-2400

1314 Hines Avenue
San Antonio, Texas 78208
210-299-2423 FAX

Dellview Elementary–EE-5
Belinda Lopez, Principal
North East ISD

7235 Dewhurst
San Antonio, Texas 78213
210-442-0775

Instructional Materials

Spotlight Reading Schools use a wide variety of literature and other educational materials to promote beginning reading skills in primary and elementary school children. Listed below are a sampling of the kinds of materials Spotlight teachers use in their classrooms. Specific questions about products may be directed to the publishers or to the Spotlight school contacts listed below.

Product	Publisher	School contacts
1. Accelerated Reader software	**Advantage Learning Systems** 2610 Industrial St. Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495 800-338-4204	Downs Elem. Scotsdale Elem. Zavala Elem.
2. Access Linguistic System	**LinguiSystems Inc.** 3100 4th Ave, Box 747 E. Moline, ILL 61244 800-PRO-IDEA	Dellview Elem.
3. A.I.M.S. (Activities Integrating Math and Science)	**Aims Education Foundation** P.O. Box 8120 Fresno, CA 93747 800-255-5734 209-255-4094	Nathan Adams Elem.
4. Dr. Seuss books	**Random House Inc.** Books for Young Readers 201 E. 50th St., Mail Drop 3 New York, NY 10022 212-940-7818	Zavala Elem. Downs Elem.
5. Gourmet Reading	**Gourmet Curriculum Press** 1050 Greystone New Braunfels, TX 78132 800-900-2290	Zavala Elem.
6. HBJ Reading Series HBJ Treasury	**Harcourt Brace Publishers** P.O. Box 612267 Dallas, TX 800-225-5425 214-929-4666	Downs Elem. Zavala Elem.

7. Heartbeeps Software	**Lindy Enterprises** School Vision of Texas P.O. Box 90 Abilene, TX 79604 800-324-1672	**Nathan Adams Elem.**
8. Jostens Reading curriculum	**Jostens Learning Corp.** 1333 Corporate Dr., Suite 350 Irving, TX 75030 800-521-8538 972-518-1181	Downs Elem.
9. Junior Great Books	**The Great Books Foundation** (a non-profit organization) 35 E. Wacker Dr., Suite 2300 Chicago, IL 60601-2298 800-222-5870	Nathan Adams Elem.
10. Kid Pix software	**Broderbund** School Vision of Texas P.O. Box 90 Abilene, TX 79604 800-324-1672	Zavala Elem.
11. Leap Frog books	**Leap Frog Learning Materials** 100 S. Main St. Crandall, TX 75114 972-472-6896	Atlanta Elem. Cedar Valley Elem.
12. Living Book software	**Broderbund** School Vision of Texas P.O. Box 90 Abilene, TX 79604 800-324-1672	Zavala Elem.
13. MacMillan Reading series	**MacMillan/McGraw Hill** 220 E. Danieldale Rd. DeSoto, TX 75115 800-843-8855	Carl Waitz Elem. Nathan Adams Elem.

14. Michael Eaton Language Arts, Questioning Strategies	**Michael Eaton Assoc.** 1405 W. Frankford Carrollton, TX 75007 800-322-0459	Scotsdale Elem.
15. Modern Curriculum Press books	**Modern Curriculum Press** 4350 Equity Dr. P.O. Box 2649 Columbus, OH 43216 800-321-3106	Dellview Elem.
16. Open Court Reading & Phonics programs	**Open Court Publishing** P.O. Box 599 Peru, IL 61354-0599 800-465-6850	Heights Elem. Cedar Valley Elem.
17. Reading Mastery	**SRA/McGraw Hill** 220 E. Danieldale Rd. DeSoto, TX 75115 800-843-8855	Wesley Elem.
18. Reader Rabbit software	**Broderbund** School Vision of Texas P.O. Box 90 Abilene, TX 79604 800-324-1672	Zavala Elem.
19. Rebecca Sitton Spelling	**Northwest Textbook** 17970 SW McEwan Rd. Portland, OR 97224 503-639-3193	Zavala Elem.
20. Rigby Beginning Reading	**Rigby** P.O. Box 797 Crystal Lake, IL 60039-0797 800-523-2371	Mading Elem. Dyess Elem. Heights Elem.
21. Riverside Phonics & Spelling	**Houghton Mifflin Co.** 13400 Midway Rd. Dallas, TX 75244 972-980-1100	Carl Waitz Elem.

22. Saxon Phonics	**Saxon Publishers** P.O. Box 599 Fairfield, TX 75840 800-669-8398	Mading Elem.
23. Scholastic Beginning Reading System	**Scholastic Inc.** 2931 E. McCarty St. Jefferson, MO 65107 800-724-6527	Downs Elem.
24. Sim Town software	**Maxis School Products** School Vision of Texas P.O. Box 90 Abilene, TX 79604 800-324-1672	Zavala Elem.
25. SRA Reading Labs	**SRA/McGraw Hill** 220 E. Danieldale Rd. DeSoto, TX 75115-9960 800-843-8855	Nathan Adams Elem. Zavala Elem.
26. Sunshine Reading, The Story Box: Guided Reading Kits	**The Wright Group** 19201 120th Ave. NE Bothell, WA 98011 800-648-2970	Heights Elem. Dellview Elem. Carl Waitz Elem.
27. Weekly Reader Guided Reading Kits	**Weekly Reader Corp.** 3001 Sindel Dr. P.O. Box 8007 Delran, NJ 08075-9978 800-446-3355	Zavala Elem.
28. Wiggle Works	**Scholastic Inc.** 2931 E. McCarty St. Jefferson City, MO 65101 800-724-6527	Scotsdale Elem.

Acknowledgements

This document was brought to you through the cooperation of the following groups:

Reading Spotlight Schools

Atlanta Elementary; Atlanta, TX
Atlanta Primary; Atlanta, TX
Carl Waitz Elementary; Mission, TX
Cedar Valley Elementary; Killeen, TX
Dellview Elementary; San Antonio, TX
Downs Elementary; San Benito, TX
Dyess Elementary; Abilene, TX
Heights Elementary; Laredo, TX
Mading Elementary; Houston, TX
Nathan Adams Elementary; Dallas, TX
Scotsdale Elementary; Ysleta, TX
Wesley Elementary; Houston, TX
Zavala Elementary; Grand Prairie, TX

The Staff of the Texas Mentor School Network

Special Thanks to the following for their contributions and support to this document:

Jean Osborn, Education Consultant for Texas Education Agency
Susan Barnes, Interim Director, Statewide Initiatives, Region XIII ESC
Carmyn Neely, Former Director, Statewide Initiatives, Region XIII ESC
Linda Groseclose, Educational Consultant
Charlotte Parramore, Administrative Intern
Kathleen Mihalik, Technology Support

Well Done!!!

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NOTES

For additional copies please write to:

REGION
EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER
XIII

5701 Springdale Road
Austin, TX 78723-3675
Dr. Roy Benavides, Executive Director
http://www.esc13.tenet.edu

Refer to Publication: 383-01-97

Cost is $1.50 per book

Special Thanks to Joan Berry

BEST COPY AVAILABLE